



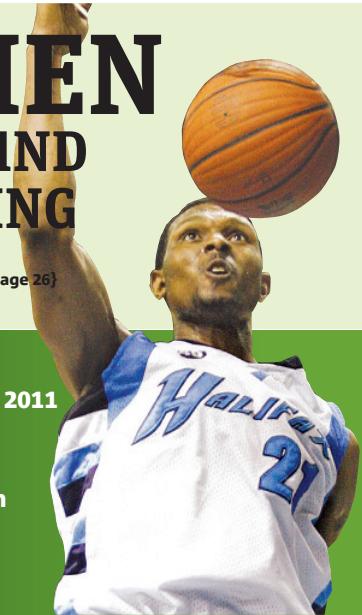
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TO IMPRESS {page 15}



RAINMEN PLAYOFF BOUND AFTER OUSTING SAINT JOHN



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Harper commits to deal

► \$6.2B hydroelectricity project between Nova Scotia, Newfoundland and Labrador unveiled Nov. 18 ► Media iterate that PM allowing only four questions at pressers

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper committed to a loan guarantee or equivalent financial support for the Lower Churchill hydroelectric project during a speech in St. John's on Thursday evening.

He said the project is a game changer for the entire region as a move towards greener energy. No specific financial details were given.

Halifax was Harper's first election stop in Atlantic Canada on Thursday. It consisted of a mid-morning press conference, a quick radio interview and sipping beer before noon.

In one of the few questions he took at a press conference inside the Halterm Container Terminal, Harper voiced his support for the hydroelectricity project but said there's "a lot of discussion yet to go" on the specifics.

"This is a very important project not just for Newfoundland and Labrador but for Nova Scotia and the entire region," he said.

Harper then defended his position on the upcoming debates with the leaders of the Liberal, NDP and Bloc Québécois par-

"I spoke to Mr. Harper (Thursday) evening, and affirmed that this project is a win-win for all of us, that will change the economic landscape of this province and the region for generations to come." PREMIER DARRELL DEXTER IN A STATEMENT

ties. He said his first preference was a one-on-one debate with Michael Ignatieff, but the Liberal leader wanted the other leaders to be present.

Ignatieff said he's open to a one-on-one debate with Harper but was turned down.

After the presser, Harper did a brief radio interview at News 95.7, then was whisked away to a photo op at the Red Stag Tavern.

As he left News 95.7, he was asked whether his party would offer financial support for the proposed downtown convention centre. Harper said he couldn't commit to anything during the campaign.

• JENNIFER TAPLIN



► Prime Minister Stephen Harper pours a pint of Alexander Keith's during a campaign stop at the Red Stag Tavern in Halifax on Thursday. Story, page 2.

Trevor Zinck takes his seat

MLA facing fraud charges says he has a lot of support {page 3}

Mayor talks state of the city

Says he's moving forward despite spending scandal {page 4}



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news



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Stephen Harper is accused of campaigning in a bubble, and reporters are trying to burst it. Video at metronews.ca

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Harper touts trade deals

► Free-trade agreements would open up huge markets ► Halifax is a 'city we are counting on to help deliver a Conservative victory': PM

RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



► Prime Minister Stephen Harper makes a campaign stop at the HalTerm container terminal on Thursday.



JENNIFER
TAPLIN
@METRONEWS.CA

Upcoming free-trade agreements with the European Union and India may be a boon to Halifax.

Conservative Leader Stephen Harper said a trade contract with the European Union is coming early next year and another with India will be completed in 2013. He made the announcement at a press conference at the Halterm Container Terminal on Thursday morning.

Mayor Peter Kelly said

the Indian agreement, especially, might come in handy.

"Before we've been approached by members of the Indo community who wanted to bring in businesses this year, and that might be an opportunity for them to come over here and invest and help us grow our economy," Kelly said in an interview later on Thursday.

Harper said his government, if elected, will move "full throttle" to complete these agreements.

"As the citizens of Hal-

"Looking out over Halifax Harbour, the economic benefits of global trade are really obvious."

STEPHEN HARPER

fax are very aware, they also know secure and stable access to more and larger export markets is essential if we are going to sell more Canadian goods and services to the world," Harper said.

And because it was a campaign stop, Harper mentioned the Liberals

negotiated only three free-trade agreements during their 13 years in office. He said a Liberal minority would have an even worse track record because the NDP and Bloc Québécois traditionally don't support free-trade deals.

"Michael Ignatieff would face more haggling in his own government than he would with foreign trade negotiators. It would be a gong show."

Harper said his Conservatives have negotiated eight contracts and are currently in discussions with 50 countries.

Leaders suddenly find time to visit HRM

First there was Harper. Now Jack and Iggy are making appearances in HRM this weekend.

NDP Leader Jack Layton is scheduled to hold a noontime rally at the Dartmouth Sportsplex on Saturday.

The next day, Liberal Leader Michael Ignatieff will stroll into town for a campaign rally at the Westin Hotel at 6:30 p.m.

This will be the first visit to Nova Scotia for both candidates since the federal election was called last weekend.

Harper's visit to Halifax on Thursday was also his first trip to the region.

There's no word on when Green party Leader Elizabeth May might be heading our way.

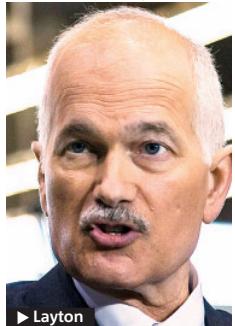
Going into the election, the NDP and Liberals each held down two seats in HRM ridings. The other riding, including a part of HRM — South Shore-St. Margarets — is held by the Conservatives.

● LAURA WARREN



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ANDREW VAUGHAN/THE CANADIAN PRESS



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RYAN TAPLIN/METRO



► Mayor Peter Kelly speaking at his State of the City address to the Halifax Chamber of Commerce on Thursday.

Mayor stands ground after his city address

► Kelly also expects a decision on federal funding for convention centre after the federal election



JENNIFER
TAPLIN
@METRONEWS.CA

The mayor tried to reassure the business community in light of the recent spending scandal at city hall during his state of the city address on Thursday.

Peter Kelly opened with a joke: "I would like to assure you that this speech has been vetted and approved by the auditor general."

But after his speech he faced questions from members of the Halifax Chamber of Commerce and the media about his leadership. He told the Chamber he will not resign and will leave it up to the voters in the next election.

"You can't hide from any of these issues. I've got a job to do and I will continue to do the job. Whatever questions come my way I'll

Highlights

► **Region** Mayor Peter Kelly's State of the City address discussed the Strategic Urban Partnership, which involves the three levels of government working with stakeholders to "encourage operational efficiencies," and will launch April 28th.

► **HRM** and province will form the Opportunity Sites Task Force to bring vacant and under-used downtown property owned by government to the market. Government owns 12 per cent of downtown Halifax land and 14 per cent of Dartmouth downtown real estate.

continue to answer them," he told reporters.

"We have to allow (the auditor general) to do his job. He will, then we'll

move forward from there." In his speech, Kelly listed council's initiatives to develop downtown, the possibility of a new stadium and the now-permanent "people's oval."

He urged the business community to speak out against the province's recent announcement that it will end the municipal funding agreement. Municipalities will have to pay more to the province for public housing, corrections and education.

Kelly said it will cost the HRM \$46 million over the next four years.

"We'll have to pick up more costs this year — \$1.2 million — next year is \$9.6 million and the year after that \$14 million, and after that about \$19 million," he said.

"We are frustrated, concerned and we want change to this approach."



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WILDLIFE

Geese back from their winter break

The geese are making their return on today to Sullivan's Pond.

At 9:30 a.m., a total of 10 geese will be put back in the Dartmouth pond

as the warmer weather returns.

The geese were spending the colder months at the Hope for Wildlife Society in Seaford, where an empty half-acre was provided for them as a safe haven during the winter season.

Hope for Wildlife is better known as a place for injured and orphaned wildlife to go, but space was opened up for the geese.

• METRO

Poor conditions halt seal hunt

Only a couple of boats have headed out into the Gulf of St. Lawrence to participate in the annual seal hunt because of poor conditions.

Officials with the federal Fisheries Department say the lack of ice in the area has caused fishermen to keep their boats tied up in Nova Scotia and the north shore of Quebec.

Christian Houle, area director for Fisheries in the region, says only fisher-

450 The number of harp seals harvested since the hunt began earlier this week.

men from the Iles-de-la-Madeleine have participated in the hunt so far.

Houle says he doesn't expect too many people from the islands to participate this year since the conditions are bad and there are few markets for the pelts. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Teen charged in robbery

Police have charged a 14-year-old male after a robbery in Cole Harbour on Wednesday night.

Halifax RCMP say the incident took place at JC's store on Cole Harbour Road. Police say the teen pulled out what the clerk thought was a weapon, but fled after the clerk screamed. • METRO

Financial crime unit lays charges

A 26-year-old Dartmouth man is facing charges after police's Integrated Financial Crime Unit searched a residence late Wednesday in the 6200 block of Quinpool Road. Jonathan Deyoung of Halifax is facing four counts of possession of credit card date and four counts of breaching probation. • METRO

News in brief**Murder case postponed until June**

ASSESSMENT. The case of a Nova Scotia man charged with killing his wife has been adjourned until June 7. Patrick Chareka of Antigonish is charged with first-degree murder in the death of Ottilia Chareka. Dates for a preliminary hearing were expected to be set Wednesday in provincial court. But the Crown and defence requested a delay so that psychological

assessments can be done. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Police catch would-be thieves

DARTMOUTH. Halifax police have laid charges after a pair of would-be thieves tried to steal a shopping cart full of electronics.

Police say the two men made no attempt to pay for the items before walking out of a Zellers in Mic Mac Mall on Wednesday night. When a security guard approached them, police say one of the men pulled a knife and told the guard to back off. **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

Police won't confirm identity in suspension

► HRP won't say how long investigations will take ► Media report points to Chris McNeil, a cop since 1982 and brother of Liberal Leader Stephen McNeil



PHILIP CROUCHER
@METRONEWS.CA

Halifax Regional Police will not confirm a report that Deputy Chief Chris McNeil has been suspended by the force.

The CBC is reporting McNeil is suspended in regards to an investigation into allegations he may have lied under oath.

What police will say is that two officers have been suspended by the force on "unrelated matters."

"When an officer is suspended under The Police Act, we are not able to

Legal

► The CBC is reporting Halifax Regional Police Chief Frank Beazley has hired defence lawyer Joel Pink for a legal opinion on whether McNeil may have perjured himself.

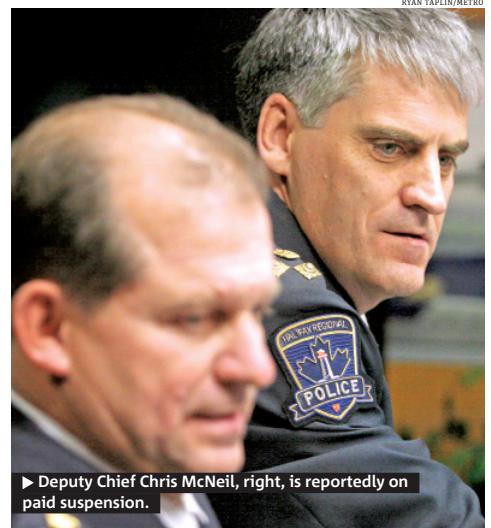
confirm the officer's identity," police spokesman Const. Brian Palmer told Metro on Thursday. "But what we can say is we currently have two officers under suspension, under The Police Act, for two separate and unrelated matters."

The Police Act investigation, according to the CBC, is trying to determine whether McNeil perjured himself in a case involving his brother and fellow HRP officer, Sgt. Anthony McNeil.

The CBC said McNeil was interviewed about two separate investigations into the involvement of HRP officers and a private lie-detector company.

In both suspensions, the officers are suspended with pay.

"It's indefinite until the investigation is complete," Palmer said. "But suspensions are routinely reviewed by the chief (Frank Beazley) to see if



► Deputy Chief Chris McNeil, right, is reportedly on paid suspension.

the suspension should continue or if they should be lifted."

Palmer added the suspensions have caused them as a force "to reflect on what we're doing, but it's part of the process and we're open to that process."

Beazley reportedly informed senior officers of the suspensions on Wednesday night.

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Fixes sought for ailing health system

► Hospital waiting times are on the minds of a majority of residents in HRM when it comes to health care, survey finds

BY THE NUMBERS

RICK EMBERLEY

HALIFAX@METRONEWS.CA



Looking for a doctor these days?

The availability of doctors continues to be high on the list of concerns that residents of HRM have about our health-care system.

And this comes at a time when 43 per cent of us express some level of concern about the overall system.

But it is waiting times

Survey

► Sample size is 503 HRM residents, with margin of error plus or minus 4.6 per cent

that top the list of concerns. Seventy-eight per cent of HRM residents feel this is the issue on which all levels of government should focus their immediate attention.

Despite the public attention it often receives, emergency care is well down the list of concerns with just over 60 per cent of survey respondents thinking it should be a high priority.

A number of regional and national polls suggest health care now trumps

the economy as the policy issue of most concern to people.

Here in HRM, however, it is running a close second to economic matters. Twenty-five per cent of local residents feel that the economy is the No. 1 issue, as compared to 21 per cent for health care.

This might be explained by the concentration of health-care facilities and professionals in HRM.

If we're concerned about the system, are we as concerned about our own health?

Fifty-six per cent of us report we are overweight, 41 per cent say they never participate in vigorous exercise and a further 26 per cent do so rarely.

While 46 per cent say they take at least some vitamins everyday, we report our general eating habits as questionable.

Over one-third admit to poor eating habits. Yet 56 per cent claim to be on some sort of a diet, mostly one of their own design.

The question that obviously arises from these results is whether we will take more responsibility for our own health outcomes at a time when our faith in the system seems to be deteriorating.

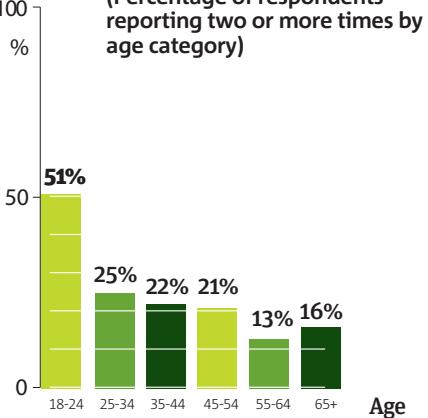
Rick Emberley is senior counsel at Marketquest-Omnifacts, an Atlantic Canada research firm. He has conducted public opinion research in the region for over 25 years.



► Hospital workers wheel a patient down the hallway in the intermediate care unit at the Halifax Infirmary in this file photo from last year.

In a typical week, how often would you participate in vigorous exercise?

(Percentage of respondents reporting two or more times by age category)



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Rights report hits at Tories' record

► Amnesty International says Canada's global reputation has been eroded ► Feds' uncompromising support for Israel is criticized



The Stephen Harper government has eroded Canada's global reputation as a human rights champion, says a respected international watchdog.

The scathing report by Amnesty International does not name the Harper Conservatives but it raises many frequent criticisms of Tory foreign policy.

Those criticisms include uncompromising support

for Israel in the Middle East and the defunding of non-governmental agencies, such as Kairos, that have publicly criticized the Tories or provided aid to Palestinians.

Amnesty calls on party leaders to use the federal election campaign to restore Canada's commitment to rights at home and abroad.

"Sometimes Canada is now also seen as part of the problem, not the solution," said Amnesty secretary general Salil Shetty.

"There has been erosion of Canada's past policies, including a principled and non-partisan reputation in the Middle East."

The report says the government's "unflinching refusal" to criticize Israel's human rights record has eroded Canada's reputation in the Middle East.

"Serious violations committed by the Israeli government have on occasion been described as 'a measured response' and Canada's voice was noticeably moderate when hundreds

of thousands of Sri Lankan Tamils faced grave peril in early 2009," the report said.

Harper used the phrase "measured response" in 2006 to describe Israel's decision to bomb Lebanon in retaliation for the kidnapping of two soldiers.

That comment provoked the ire of Arab and Muslim Canadians and was widely interpreted as a sign the Conservatives had begun taking sides the Middle East conflict.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Nose-biting boyfriend convicted

A Burnaby, B.C. man who bit off his girlfriend's nose has been convicted of aggravated assault and sexual assault.

A B.C. Supreme Court judge rendered the verdict against Ronaldo Gonzalez-Hernandez.

The woman, who can't be named because of a publication ban, testified the couple had been drinking when he became aggressive while they were kissing.

She tried to resist his advances but he clamped his teeth over her nose, biting it off.

The woman has since had her nose rebuilt from skin grafts from her forehead. THE CANADIAN PRESS



Montreal police used pepper spray to disperse students protesting higher tuition fees on Thursday. Many of the students were chased along busy Sherbrooke Street. At least four people were arrested.

GRAHAM HUGHES/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Student protest turns chaotic



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► The RCMP's Bob Paulson and Durham Regional Police Deputy Chief Sherry Whiteway finish an Afghanistan tour Thursday.

POLICE IN AFGHANISTAN THE KEY IS BUILDING TRUST, SAYS MOUNTIE

The greatest challenge for police participating in Canada's upcoming training mission in Afghanistan will be building trust between the Afghan police and locals, an RCMP deputy commissioner said Thursday after touring the war-torn country.

Several senior police commanders wrapped up a weeklong visit of Kabul and Kandahar in a bid to better define what their officers will be teaching their Afghan counterparts once the training mission, dubbed Operation Attention, begins this summer.

RCMP deputy commissioner Bob Paulson, who oversees federal and international policing, echoed the oft-repeated sentiment of military commanders when he said strengthening the links between the community and Afghan police will be a major goal.

"Getting to establish that trust with the local communities is the key

and that's, I think, the biggest challenge," Paulson said at Kandahar Airfield.

The ranks of the Afghan National Police have grown. In the Panjwaii district, for example, there are about 500 registered ANP out of 700 allocated positions — an increase from 140 in the fall.

But the public perception of the ANP has sometimes struggled because of corruption and indiscipline.

This is something Canadian police officers will strive to correct once the training mission begins in July, particularly at the senior management level, Paulson said.

There are 17 RCMP officers among about 50 from city and provincial police forces across Canada now serving in Afghanistan.

It is unclear how many officers will be needed for the training mission and where they will be based.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

PARENTS

RYAN REMIORZ/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Frustrated scribes say the PM is no treat

The yellow steel fence that kept reporters far from Stephen Harper in Halifax Thursday was a potent symbol of his election campaign.

Harper is running a tight travelling show with little room for spontaneity, where national media are limited to four questions per day — and kept a safe distance from the Conservative leader.

Harper was pressed by frustrated reporters to explain the strict control of his campaign and his reluctance to answer more questions, in contrast to the dozens that are taken by his rivals.

"If there are other subjects I'm not addressing, I'll take 'em. What's the subject, one subject?" Harper said, ignoring the question about the limits placed on the media.

National media are paying \$11,000 per person per week to travel with Harper.

But six days into the campaign, he has still not greeted the 25 reporters and TV technicians traveling aboard his campaign plane.

His wife, Laureen, ambled to the back of the aircraft late Wednesday night to offer chocolate-covered treats.

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Libyan officials trying to defect: Diplomat

► Attacks on civilians reportedly triggering decisions

Most high-level Libyan officials are trying to defect but are under tight security and having difficulty leaving the country, a top Libyan diplomat now supporting the opposition said Thursday.

Ibrahim Dabbashi, Libya's deputy UN ambassador, told The Associated Press that Libya's UN mission, which now totally supports the opposition, knew two days in advance that Foreign Minister Moussa Koussa planned to defect on Wednesday.

He said the mission had been waiting for about 10 days for Thursday's defection of Ali Abdessalam Treki, a former foreign minister selected by Moam-

Refusal

- Britain refused Thursday to offer the Libyan former foreign minister immunity from prosecution after his apparent defection, raising the possibility that Moussa Koussa could be prosecuted for his past role in propping up Moammar Gadhafi's regime.
- Within hours, Scottish prosecutors said they were seeking Koussa for questioning over the 1988 Lockerbie bombing that killed 270 people, many of them Americans.

mar Gadhafi to be the new UN ambassador.

Asked why senior Libyan officials are defecting — or want to defect — now instead of last month when opposition protests against Gadhafi's 41-year rule began, Dabbashi said it was a reaction to the regime's attacks on civilians.

Dabbashi said Koussa's defection in Britain is especially significant because he was the chief of external intelligence for about eight years and foreign minister for about two years.

"I think that he has a lot of secret information about the regime — about the current operations by Libya during the last decades," Dabbashi said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



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William: Hair to the throne

► As wedding draws near, Prince William can't escape talk of bald spot

U.S. Service animals



► Dani Moore keeps her service rat, Hiyo Silver, on her shoulder in Hesperia, Calif.

DAMIAN DOVARGANES/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Dogs and horses, but no rats

Dani Moore uses a rat perched on her shoulder as a service animal to alert her to spasms from a disabling condition. But this creature and many others are no longer acceptable as service animals under new federal guidelines issued March 15 by the U.S. Department of Justice for the Americans with Disabilities Act. The new recommendations limit service animals to dogs and housebroken miniature horses.

Prince William looks like someone who has it all: Royal status, a charming fiancée, good health and an easy touch with his future subjects. But there is one thing he lacks: A full head of hair.

Casual observers who have not paid much attention to Britain's future king in the years before his recent engagement to Kate Middleton have been surprised by the extent of the 28-year-old's hair loss.

William still cuts a tall,

"He's got the prince appeal and I don't think ... the lack of hair can ever take that away."

JENNIFER ENGELHART, 19-YEAR-OLD STUDENT

imposing figure, but his bald spot has been spreading as his hairline recedes.

It's even more apparent since his 26-year-old brother, Prince Harry, still sports a luxuriant supply of tousled red hair.

The British tabloids have been merciless in their coverage, constantly punning the "hair to the throne" theme and comparing his hair loss to that of his father, Prince Charles, and the follicly challenged prime minister, David Cameron. William's receding hairline has a genetic link. His father, Charles, and his grandfather, Prince Philip, also experienced it, though at a slower pace.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



► Prince William

PETER MORRISON/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

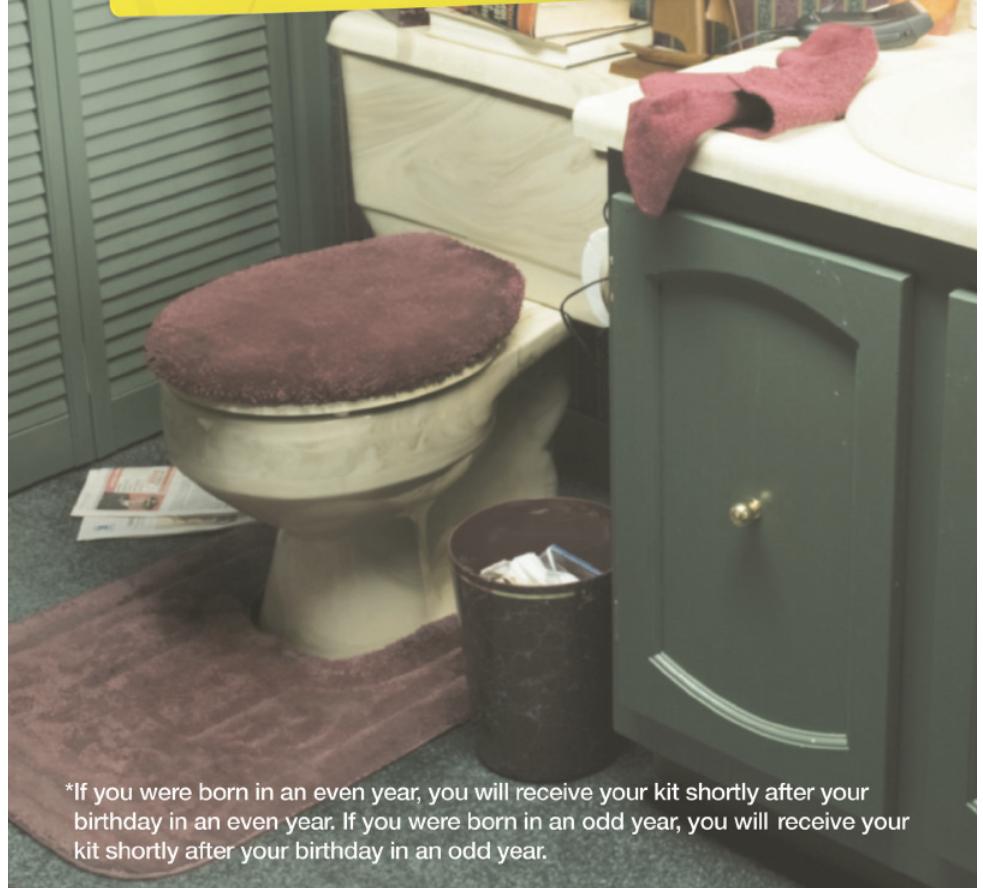
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PUBLIC MOBILE

Telecom firm eyes takeovers

Public Mobile expects at least one of the two other new players in Canada's wireless market to run out of money by the end of the year, presenting the company with a possible expansion opportunity, CEO Alek Krstajic said yesterday in Toronto. He was referring to Wind Mobile and Mobilicity, and acknowledged that he has made calls to them.

Consolidation among the three telecom companies is possible

because there are no federal rules to prevent it among the new wireless players, he said.

Public Mobile is aimed at the low end of the market, providing unlimited talk and text plans with no contracts and no credit checks.

Telecom analyst Mark Goldberg said he expects there will be "some degree" of consolidation in the wireless industry due to the "remarkable" number of wireless players in Canadian cities.

Krstajic wouldn't say how many subscribers Public Mobile has, but said the Toronto-based company will soon offer email plans and a voice-only plan to try to win more customers.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market moment

TSX	Dollar	Oil	Natural gas
			
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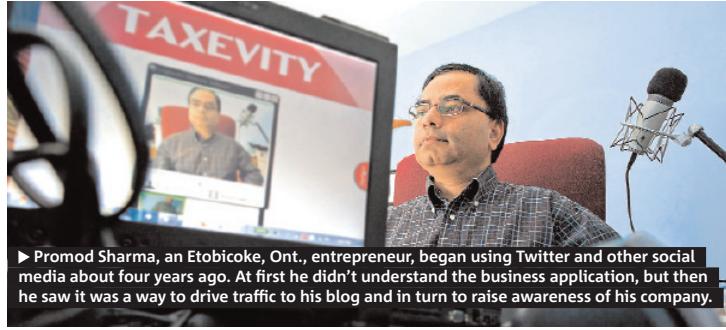
Small companies slowly catching on to the benefits of digital marketing

With some of the fastest broadband connections in the world, the majority of Canadians have embraced the Internet. And yet small businesses are late to the table when it comes to online marketing.

"The gap between where consumers are and where businesses are in terms of use of the Internet is greater than I would have expected," says Chris O'Neill, managing director of Google Canada.

O'Neill says digital media offer an easy and inexpensive way to advertise and track consumer awareness of one's business. But only one million or so Canadian small businesses have a website, out of a total of about 2.2 million, he says.

While it is difficult to measure return on invest-



► Promod Sharma, an Etobicoke, Ont., entrepreneur, began using Twitter and other social media about four years ago. At first he didn't understand the business application, but then he saw it was a way to drive traffic to his blog and in turn to raise awareness of his company.

ment for digital advertising, a recent study of email versus direct-mail costs by digital agency Quizative Inc.

found email to be 60 times more cost-effective. And online ad revenue is "rapidly closing in on daily newspaper ad revenue," according to the Interactive Advertising

Bureau of Canada.

Promod Sharma, an Etobicoke, Ont., entrepreneur, is one of 15 million Canadians with a Facebook page. He has Twitter and LinkedIn accounts, and he blogs, posts videos on YouTube and has a website for his insurance sales busi-

ness, Taxevity. But it took him a while to understand the value of social media, he says.

"Then I saw that Twitter was a way to drive traffic to my blog," he says, which in turn was a way to attract customers to his business.

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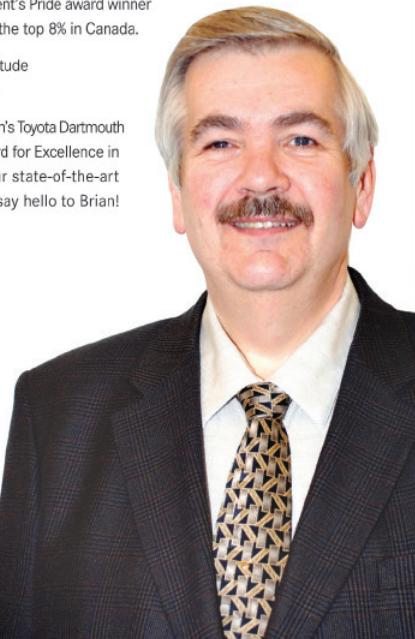
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GDP better than mediocre early year forecast

Canada's economy began the year as strongly as it ended 2010, posting a robust 0.5 per cent expansion in January that sets the stage for a strong first quarter of growth.

The performance was in line with market projections, but still was a mild surprise because many economists had worried of a possible payback after December's equally strong 0.5 per cent gain in gross domestic product. As well, retail sales were already known to have declined 0.3 per cent during the month.

But the auto sector, which had largely underperformed in December, came to the rescue with a 2.8 per cent pickup.

Scotiabank economist Derek Holt noted that while the overall advance

was impressive, it is not likely to be repeated in February. In particular, the auto boost was exaggerated by shutdowns the previous month for retooling.

"It's a total head fake. It's reflecting the unusually timed production factor in the auto and feeder industries like fabricated metals," he explained. "It's not sustainable."

The economy is on track to record a growth rate of about four per cent in the first quarter, even with tepid data in February and March, analysts noted — any future growth is calibrated from a higher base.

The January data almost certainly means the Bank of Canada will need to revisit a lukewarm reading of the economy taken in January.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Growth

- In January, Statistics Canada said growth was broadly based in both durable and non-durable goods, with makers of fabricated metal products and the auto sector posting the largest increases.
- Manufacturing overall grew 2.8 per cent, compared with a 0.8 per cent gain in December.
- The transportation and warehousing sector advanced 1.2 per cent, helped by higher rail shipments of iron ore and gains in the trucking industry.
- On the flip side, output in mining and oil and gas declined 0.5 per cent, and retail sales slipped 0.1 per cent.



► Frank Stronach is shown speaking at the company's AGM in Markham, Ont., on Thursday.

FRANK GUNN/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Magna magnate to resign

Frank Stronach plans to step down as chairman of Magna International Inc. after the company's annual meeting this year. Stronach became one of Canada's richest people by creating Magna and building it into one of the world's largest suppliers of auto parts.

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▶ Mark Critch

5 MINUTES WITH: MARK CRITCH

He's one of Canada's top comedians and a star on CBC TV's hit show *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*. Mark Critch is also a big fan of the Halifax ComedyFest, at which he will perform again April 13-16.

How did you start out as a comedian?

I started acting sketch comedy in St. John's, N.L., when I was 15. I rented a theatre here called the LSPU Hall, which is where Rick Mercer, Mary Walsh and everybody got their start ... Then, from there, I started doing stand-up, and my first time on TV doing stand-up was actually a

guest spot on the Halifax Comedy Festival.

Why is the Halifax ComedyFest so successful?

First of all, the audiences in Halifax are great and comedians love coming there and performing for them because they're very open and energetic. They are ready to laugh and ready to have a good time, and when that happens comedians get excited and they get better performances ... It's like a perfect storm, it keeps getting better and better.

What makes a good joke?

It has to be a plausible scenario ... Generally, it has to have an element of surprise or something unusual in it.

What has *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* done for you?

It's definitely opened up a whole other world as a way to make people laugh and the great thing I love about it is getting to meet people when you do these interviews ... It teaches you to write quickly and not to spend too much time fussing and fixing things and to be quick. Just the ability to travel around the country and meet Canadians and

having a TV show is nice. That's always fun.

What's one of your favourite comedic memories?

Back when George W. Bush was running against John Kerry for the first time, I was trying to sneak in ... to interview him. And then this cop comes out of nowhere and says, "You can't go up there." I said, "Who says?" and the cop says, "He does," and he pointed to the roof and there's a sniper with a gun pointed at me. I was like, "Oh, this is different, this isn't like Canada."

● LAURA WARREN

Cartoon

MICHAEL DE ADDER

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Worth mentioning

A Montana RadioShack owner said he will continue to give away guns with satellite television subscriptions despite the corporation's insistence he halt the promotion.

Since October, independent dealer Steve Strand has been offering a gift card for a \$125 pistol or \$115 shotgun and a free background check to customers who sign up for two-year Dish Network packages.

Those not interested in the firearms can opt for a \$50 pizza gift certificate.

RadioShack Corp. officials called Strand Tuesday and ordered him to pull the promotion, he told the

The way of life in Montana



DAVID ERICKSON/RAVALLI REPUBLIC/THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

in Montana."

In an attempt to appease the company, Strand has taken down the sign in his window that said: "Protect yourself with Dish Network. Sign up now, get free gun."

In its place is a sign advertising a website Strand set up detailing the promotion, GetaGun.net.

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What's your favourite knock-knock joke?

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Metro Minute at Halifax film festival

The Halifax Independent Filmmakers Festival is running from Saturday through April 8 at various venues around the city.

Now in its fifth year, the well-known festival is a non-competitive setting free from commercials and advertisements. It will feature screenings of short films and presentations from artists all across

Canada.

On opening night, there will be a screening of Metropolis at the University of King's College, followed by the opening night party at the school.

Tickets are \$5 each, three for \$15 or \$60 for a HIFF pass. For a complete schedule of events, visit hiff.ca.

● METRO

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Meghan Trainor

I play on the women's field hockey team at SMU, so I'm friends with some of the girls on the team. I think they're happy ... It was kind of a surprise — they didn't get much notice on whether or not it was cancelled.



Dale MacPhee

It's a huge plus ... There's no reason to really take a successful team off the roster and if it's going to draw more women to the school and more students to the school, then why not?



► James Marsden stars in Hop, which opens today.

Reel Guys

RICHARD CROUSE & MARK BRESLIN

SCENE@METRONEWS.CA



Don't Hop to it

► Richard Crouse and Mark Breslin debate the merits of Hop ► There isn't much for the adults in this kid's film, even with a cameo by David Hasselhoff

Richard Crouse: Mark, to me Hop feels more like an hour-and-a-half advertisement for plush stuffed bunnies than it does a movie. EB and his bunny and Easter chick friends are cute but clearly more time was spent on the marketing angle than the story. What did you think?

Mark Breslin: Richard, let's face it; we've lost the battle when it comes to marketing of characters in kids' movies. I now just assume that the movie is a promo for the spending to come. A five-year-old will be transfixed by the eye candy onscreen; the question is whether there's anything for their parents to enjoy. In movies like Toy Story or Shrek, there's plenty. But in this one, Richard? What do you think?

Plot synopsis

Hop begins on Easter Island, home base of the Easter Bunny (voice of Hugh Laurie) and his son EB (Russell Brand). On the other side of the planet, Fred O'Hare (James Marsden) is an unemployed So-Cal slacker house sitting for his sister's wealthy

RC: The humour and broad acting style is directed at little kids, yet the movie is rated PG, which means that parents can't just send their kids solo. Grown-ups might get a chuckle out of EB's jelly-bean gag — he poops jelly-beans and says at one point, "I just jellybeaned all over your dreams" — but the odd cameo from David Hasselhoff — he's going for the William Shatner self-aware shtick — is as funny as you'd

boss. Both EB and Fred have one thing in common — daddy issues. When EB and Fred hook up in Hollywood, the pair discovers they might be able to help one another out and save Easter in the process.

► **Ratings:**
Richard: **•**
Mark: **•½**

imagine a cameo from The Hoff to be. There's not much here for anyone over four years old. Harvey this ain't.

MB: No, but I did enjoy the look of the movie, all primary colours and a few visual gags that popped up just often enough to keep me from losing my mind. The oddest part of the movie was the casting, and not just Hasselhoff. I thought Russell Brand, the comedian du

jour, had been so neutered he was wasted in the part (and I don't mean wasted in the usual Russell Brand way). Couldn't the part have been done by Any Brit?

RC: If this had even a little bit of edge I could see why they chose him, but as it seems like he's only there because Ricky Gervais and Eddie Izzard were too busy or too clever to take the role. I actually had some hope for Hop when I heard Brand was involved because I thought he might bring something interesting to it. Instead it is just average, which is a shame given how kid's flicks have made strides in recent years away from treating kids like they're stupid.

MB: Of course to the four-year-old sitting next to me, it was Citizen Kane

Scene in brief



Bruce Springsteen has written a Letter to the Editor to what he calls his hometown newspaper. Springsteen on Thursday thanked the Asbury Park Press for a March 27 article about how anti-poverty groups in New Jersey are facing an uphill battle as Gov. Chris Christie seeks to cut spending.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Norm Macdonald says new show brings him back to Weekend Update territory



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Mirren tackles comedy

► Actress enjoyed the chance to get to be funny with her charming Arthur co-star Russell Brand ► Said it's hard not to fall under Brand's spell



Though she may be an award-winning movie star best known for playing royalty, Helen Mirren isn't above playing the lottery.

"When the lottery gets really big — up to 40 or 50 million — I go out and buy a ticket, because it's, 'Maybe I'll win.' You fantasize about what it would be like to have millions and millions and millions of dollars," she says. "And I think we all do that. It's a fantasy we all carry within us — anyone who's ever bought a lottery ticket. We're all dreamers."

Of course, Mirren herself doesn't have to dream. While in her latest film, an update of the Dudley Moore classic *Arthur*, Mirren plays the nanny to an extravagantly rich man-child (Russell Brand) prone to outlandish purchases, in

► Helen Mirren and Russell Brand star in *Arthur*, which opens next Friday.

real life she's no stranger to splurging.

"My husband and I bought a castle in Puglia," she says. "It's like turning on the taps full, and just money pours out. Into the desert. It's just gone."

desert. It's just gone.

While Arthur marks what Mirren says is her first real comedy film in her career, teaming up with Brand helped ease her into the genre. In fact, she may have picked up

more than a little of his wit, if her description of Brand's behaviour on set is any indication.

"He never came out of his trailer. When he came out, he was always surrounded by minders, he wouldn't speak to anyone," she says, barely containing her laughter. "No, he didn't really. Well actually, I don't know because I was drunk the whole time."

But seriously, though, she thinks quite highly of Brand and his charms, explaining that she signed onto the film after the comedian "just totally seduced me the way he does, you know?" she says. "I just defy any male or female or child or ancient person to spend two hours with Russell and not be completely charmed and say, 'Yeah, fine, I'll do whatever you want.'"

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A movie poster for the horror film 'Insidious'. The central figure is a young boy with a serious, intense expression, looking directly at the viewer. He is wearing a red and blue plaid shirt. In the background, there are two large, multi-story houses with gabled roofs and white siding, set against a dark, overcast sky. The overall atmosphere is eerie and suspenseful.

Show set to Kill the competition

- AMC's newest drama *The Killing* offers uniquely sharp focus
- Series revolves around single homicide

 MATTHEW ROMANADA
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Swedish actor Joel Kinnaman moved to Hollywood and ended up becoming part of a TV show — *The Killing* — that is based on a hit Danish series, and filming in a location — Vancouver — similar to Scandinavia. Certainly a long way to travel to end up in familiar settings.

"The series (Forbrydelsen) originated in Scandinavia and this part of the U.S. and Canada (the Pacific Northwest) has a similar climate," Kinnaman told Metro, adding that the grey, coldness of both areas impact the people.

Kinnaman, who's name recognition in North America is small despite a large list of hit movies in his home country, moved to Los Angeles about three to four months prior to his audition for AMC's newest series *The Killing*. Kinnaman plays Stephen Holder, a new addition to the Seattle homicide division, who, along with his partner Sarah Linden, portrayed by Mireille Enos (*Big Love*), investigate the homicide of teenager Rosie Larsen. Kinnaman said the writing in the pilot drew him to the series.

"I thought (the writing) was very strong," he said. "It was heart-gripping and exciting. All of the characters felt layered."



► Mireille Enos, left and Joel Kinnaman, right, star in *The Killing*.

This includes his character Stephen Holder, who's rough-edges are a sharp contrast to his partner.

"He knows the streets and he understands people. He doesn't have the regular keys to a proper social upbringing. He is struggling with a lot of old mistakes."

And while Stephen and

Sarah butt heads at times, Kinnaman says he believes that deep down Stephen knows that he needs his partner to succeed.

With AMC's line up of critical favourites *Mad Men*, *The Walking Dead* and *Breaking Bad*, expectations are high for *The Killing*, and it does not disappoint.

"While I was shooting the pilot I was talking to my parents back home in Sweden and they were watching the original on TV at the time. They were absolutely addicted to the original series," Kinnaman said. "That series just struck gold."

The two-part series premiere of *The Killing* airs Sunday, 9 p.m. on AMC.

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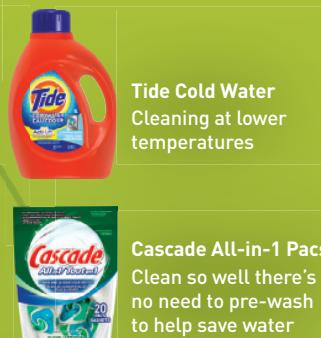
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TV's Wipeout spills into

► **Canucks take on the famous obstacle course**

JESSICA PHILLIPS
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All of the skill and hilarity of the hit show Wipeout is getting a northern twist.

Wipeout Canada, which premieres Sunday on TV-Tropolis, features 260 Canadians taking on the famous Wipeout course, completing a series of obstacles to claim the \$50,000 prize.

The show had 45,000 Canadian applicants in one month.

"What stuck out for the audition process were personalities," said co-host Ennis Esmer. "Whether it was [someone who] studied fire ants or a 60-year-old naked-volleyball-playing grandmother."

Esmer claims the contestants are what make the show so popular and give the show its identity.

A few of the obstacles the contestants will face are racing through "topple towers," bouncing on the infamous "big balls" and



► **Ennis Esmer and Jessica Phillips, two of three hosts of Wipeout Canada.**

climbing across the "sucker punch wall."

"I think everyone still has that little kid in them and it's just like a great big playground," said fellow co-host Jessica Phillips.

The contestants all have various plans of what they

would do if they won the money.

While some said they would use the money to pay off debt or tuition, there were some more interesting answers.

"One woman was like, 'I want to get breast im-

Murder, mistresses and the pope on TV's The Borgias

► New 15th century drama depicts moral ambiguities of 'first crime family' ► Premieres Sunday on Bravo!

 **IAN
JOHNSTON**
SCENE@METRONEWS.CA

Actor Colm Feore is up for almost anything — be it a lavish TV period drama, a summer blockbuster or a small Canadian documentary series.

"I do whatever it takes to keep the kids in shoe leather," says Feore, best known for such diverse works as 32 Short Films About Glenn Gould and Pearl Harbor.

"And I have to keep myself interested of course. It's always about what interests me."

What currently interests him is The Borgias, a 15th century TV drama about Rodrigo Borgia (Jeremy Irons), who would become Pope Alexander VI.

Far from being a costumed tale of courtly man-

ners, The Borgias is being promoted as "the first crime family." And it's not hard to see why. Directed by Neil Jordan (Mona Lisa, The Crying Game), The Borgias is a devilish, sometimes shocking look at a decidedly unconventional pope who, among other things, had a family, a mistress and ruthless methods to getting his way.

"It is very Godfather," says Feore, who plays the equally manipulative pope wannabe Cardinal Rovere. "You see Borgias' motivations. He wants to protect his family. He wants his kids to do well. And to do it, he's willing to kill people."

The actor says the moral ambiguities in The Borgias are such that he was under the belief his character was the "good guy" all through production.

"I saw Rovere as the shining hero of the piece. Then Neil comes up to me at the wrap party and asks me what it's like to be the bad guy."

Feore — who can currently be heard narrating History Channel's Museum Secrets — has another big costume epic set to premiere. In the highly anticipated 3-D summer blockbuster Thor, he plays Laufey, the Warrior King of the Frost Giants. Huh?

"I'm nine-and-a-half-feet tall and blue," laughs Feore, who spent hours in make-up for the role. "Director Kenneth Branagh ran the whole thing like a military operation. It's massive and massively cool."

The Borgias premieres this Sunday on Bravo! The movie Thor opens in theatres in May.

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TV picks



Paltrow traces family tree

REALITY. Gwyneth Paltrow traces the origins of her paternal grandfather on Who Do You Think You Are? Along the way, an investigation into her mother's side reveals deep roots in the Caribbean island of Barbados. (Friday, Citytv, NBC)

Chaos reigns in new series

DRAMEDY. The new dramedy Chaos centres on a group of rogue CIA spies mired in bureaucratic gridlock, rampant incompetence and political infighting. In the premiere,

plants for me and all my friends," said Esmer.

He said Wipeout Canada could just be "the greatest example of humankind's triumph over adversity since the moon landing or the industrial revolution."

newbie Rick Martinez is partnered with three unruly agents who learn he is actually a mole out to cut their jobs. (Friday, Global, CBS)

Sir Elton to host SNL

SNL. Saturday night's alright for fighting — and for hosting Saturday Night Live. Sir Elton John is the special guest on the live comedy show, and he pulls double duty as both host and musical guest. Joining him for the musical segments will be Leon Russell. (Saturday, Global, NBC)

Canuck comic lets loose

STAND-UP. Former SNL star Norm Macdonald lets loose in his first one-hour stand-up special, Norm Macdonald: Me Doing Stand-Up. The Canadian comic covers a range of topics in this joke-a-thon, including cheating death, 24-hour news stories and cheese sandwiches. (Saturday, The Comedy Network) **THE CANADIAN PRESS**

WHO'S THE APRIL FOOL?

Sound Check

ALAN CROSS

SCENE@METRONEWS.CA



I've never understood the point of April Fool's Day. How did it ever become socially acceptable for it to be open season on the inattentive, the unaware and the gullible once a year?

Many rock bands get into the spirit of things, taking the opportunity to punk both fans and the media.

Among the best (worst?) is Tool. Back in 1997, an announcement flashed around the world that members of the band had been killed in a tour bus crash in Australia. Media outlets — including MTV — ran with the story until they realized what date it was. In 1999, rumours appeared about two new singles from the band:

Anagram and Floarpail. Those who spent the day searching for these songs didn't notice that Floarpail is an anagram for April Fool. MTV got burned again in 2005 when singer Maynard James Keenan announced that he had found Jesus and was leaving the group to pursue a career in religion.

And Tool is far from alone. On April 1, 2010, Coldplay announced that like Britney, they were getting into the fragrance game, releasing a perfume called Angst, which was available in a bottle designed by producer Brian Eno. Strangely, it sold out through Coldplay's online store before anyone could make a purchase.

Metallica and Megadeth fans freaked out on April 1,



► Coldplay announced last April Fool's Day that it was releasing a perfume called Angst.

2009, when an online story insisted both Dave Mustaine and Jason Newsted would soon be rejoining Metallica in a massive example of letting bygones be bygones. The non-metal equivalent would be Jennifer Aniston accepting an invitation to move in with Brad and Angelina. Yet a number of metalheads were for it.

That same day, Trent Reznor appeared to announce that he was making a brand new album available. Strobe Light, allegedly produced by Timbaland, was offered for sale on the official Nine Inch

Nails website. The download (which required \$18.98 and a \$10 "digital delivery convenience fee") would "arrive as Windows Media files playable on quite a few players with your name embedded all over them in case you lose them ... Your email will be kept confidential and will not be used for spam, unless we can make some money selling it." One song, Even Closer, promised vocals from Justin Timberlake and the aforementioned Maynard James Keenan. Some fans didn't see the gag.

Let's be careful.

Sum of 4 years is 1 new album

It's been four years since Sum 41 last released an album, and the intervening years saw frontman Deryck Whibley endure a divorce from Avril Lavigne as well as a string of health concerns.

But he says the dark tone of the material on the band's new record, Scream Bloody Murder, can't necessarily be traced to his personal life — in fact, he says he can't really trace the origin of any of the words on his latest disc.

"It's really hard to explain what anything's about, because I don't even know what it's about," Whibley said quietly behind a pair of sunglasses during a recent interview in Toronto.

"I was just writing words that were just in my head and it was over such a long period of time that I don't have a lot of recollection of writing a lot of these things — they're just there."

And yet, these pitch-

black lyrics — sample line from the wrenching ballad What am I to Say?: "How could you be the better part of me?/ When we're only half of what we used to be today/ Could you see this isn't what we need/ And I'm leaving all the pieces how they fell/ So goodbye, farewell" — seem to have originated from an especially tough period in Whibley's life.

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► Sum 41

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Lohan moving to New York

► Hopes to leave legal problems behind ► Looking for a place with her brother ► Has friends in the city

With one California legal drama done and another set to be decided next month, Lindsay Lohan is leaving the state behind and heading back to New York, her mom, Dina Lohan, says, according to Hollyscoop. "She will be in New York a lot more going

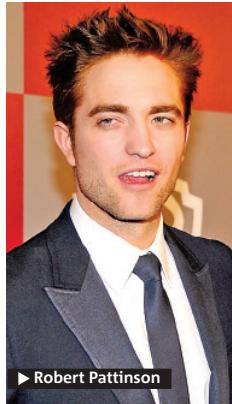
forward. She's actively looking for places in the city with her younger brother Michael," Dina says. "She loves it here. And she has a lot of friends who already have places, so she might sublet." ● METRO



► Lindsay Lohan

ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES FILE

Pattinson believes in fidelity



Rob Pattinson is a one-woman man and abhors infidelity, he tells the Italian edition of *Vanity Fair*.

"Life is not black and white ... [but] there is one thing I never understood: why people cheat," says Pattinson, who is believed to be in a long-term relationship with *Twilight* costar Kristen Stewart.

"My parents met when my mom was 17 and my father 25, they are still together and seem very happy. I grew up believing that you can be together all of your life."

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► Courteney Cox



► Josh Hopkins

Cox, Hopkins becoming a couple?

Courteney Cox was spotted this week carousing in the Caribbean with her *Cougar Town* co-star, Josh Hopkins, and her daughter, Coco, according to *People* magazine.

The co-workers have dodged rumors of a more serious off-camera

relationship since Cox separated from her husband, David Arquette. But while the vacation isn't work-related, Cox's rep insists,

"The relationship is strictly platonic and they are away with a group of friends on vacation."

● METRO

Talking points

Baby for Banks by surrogate

PEOPLE. Actress Elizabeth Banks and her husband, Max Handelman, welcomed a baby boy, Felix, this week, born via surrogate, Banks announced on her blog.

"The one true hurdle I've faced in life is that I have a broken belly," Banks candidly writes. "After years of trying to get pregnant, exploring the range of fertility treatments, all unsuccessful, our journey led us to gestational surrogacy: We make a 'baby cake' and bake it in another woman's 'oven.'"

Banks describes Felix as "a very happy baby and a blessing on our life."

● METRO

Celebrity tweets

Lily Allen
[@lilyrose allen]

Oh and who ever leaked my wedding invite to the press, you're a d--- and your not invited anymore, have some respect and stay at home.

Elijah Wood
[@wood elijah]

just so y'all know
@elijahwood isn't me.

Denise Richards
[@DENISE RICHARDS]

oh boy...Lola wants to bring about 15 different colors of nail polish on our trip! ..got her down to 3

Sarah Silverman
[@SarahK Silverman]

As I write this I'm in an unmoving airport security line standing completely still in a stranger's fart.



Miley Cyrus

Telegraph. "You shouldn't just be able to put a song on YouTube and go out on tour."

● METRO

Miley: It shouldn't be so easy

OPINION. Miley Cyrus isn't impressed with 13-year-old viral video sensation Rebecca Black, whose song *Friday* has received more than 60 million views on YouTube.

"It should be harder to be an artist," Cyrus tells Australia's Daily

● METRO

Arnold really is The Governor

With his years as governor behind him, Arnold Schwarzenegger will soon return to his acting career with a new animated TV series. The planned action-comedy cartoon is called *The Governor*, according to A Squared Entertainment. It will focus on a superhero living a double life as an ordinary family man. Schwarzenegger will provide the voice of the title character.

Comic-book legend Stan Lee is another partner in the project, which will be



officially announced Monday at the MIPTV trade show in Cannes, France.

The series is planned as the first stage of a franchise that could also include comics and films.

ASSOCIATED PRESS

3
life

Kitchen safety



Follow these food tips to keep your kitchen safe.

- Designate a separate cutting board for meat and one for vegetables.

- To keep your kitchen counters clean, choose a product with naturally-derived ingredients.

- Make sure expiry dates on food containers are visible.

NEWS CANADA



FDA examines links between food dyes and hyperactivity in children.

Add a dash of romance to dinner

► Impress your love with this Filet Mignon with Pomegranate Burgundy Sauce ► Although the meal looks elaborate, it's actually simple to make

How do you create a meal that is at once romantic?

To start, try this very simple Filet Mignon with Pomegranate Burgundy Sauce.

The recipe starts with getting just the right cut of beef.

The tenderloin that filet mignon is cut from is on the leaner side, with about seven grams of fat per 125-gram (four-ounce) portion. That's not bad, especially since a bit of fat will add flavour.

When preparing velvety, rich sauces, most recipes call for starting with a generous dollop of butter.

This recipe does away with that, instead starting with tangy pomegranate juice and dry red wine.

But the real secret here is using some veal demi-glace to add flavour, body and texture.

A good meat stock is made by roasting the bones, then simmering them for a long time with aromatic vegetables.

At some point, the solids are stained out and the liquid is reduced until it has intense flavour and the gelatin from the bones has given it a smooth, almost viscous texture.

It's the rich flavour and velvety texture of this kind of stock that can give a sauce a luxurious, glossy feel, without the need to lard it with butter.

Best of all, you don't need to bother with all that roasting and simmering.

Excellent prepared demi-glace products are available at many grocers.



► Filet mignon is a great choice to serve during a romantic dinner for two.

Preparation:

1 Heat oven to 100 C (200 F). Season steaks with salt and pepper.

2 Heat a 25-cm (10-inch) cast-iron or other heavy skillet over medium for 2 minutes. Add 10 ml (2 tsp) of the oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. Increase heat to medium-high.

3 Add steaks and cook 4 minutes per side for medium-rare. Transfer filets to ovenproof dish and place in heated oven (steaks will cook a bit more in the oven).

4 Return skillet to medium heat and add remaining 5 ml (1 tsp) oil and shallot. Sauté until shallot has softened, about 1 minute. Add wine and cook for 1 minute. Add demi-glace and pomegranate juice and increase heat to high to bring sauce to a boil. Cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce has reduced by half and thickened.

5 Spoon sauce over the filets and serve, garnished with chives and pomegranate seeds, if desired.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ingredients:

- 2 beef filet mignon (125 g/4 oz each)
- 1 ml (1/4 tsp) kosher salt
- Ground black pepper, to taste
- 15 ml (3 tsp) extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 medium shallot, minced
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) dry red wine
- 75 ml (1/3 cup) pomegranate juice
- 125 ml (1/2 cup) veal demi-glace
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) chopped fresh chives
- 30 ml (2 tbsp) pomegranate seeds (optional)

Evoke the spirit of a changing season



PETER ROCKWELL
LIQUIDASSET@EASTLINK.CA
TWITTER: @THEREALWINEGUY

When you have dogs, a backyard cleanup is less about leaf-raking and more about poop patrol. That thought came to me when a break in the winter weather saw me making my grounds more people friendly.

Of course, a fine beverage is the best reward for a nasty job well done. And a white wine with lots of thirst-quenching, tropical fruit flavour and aromatics evokes the season's spirit.

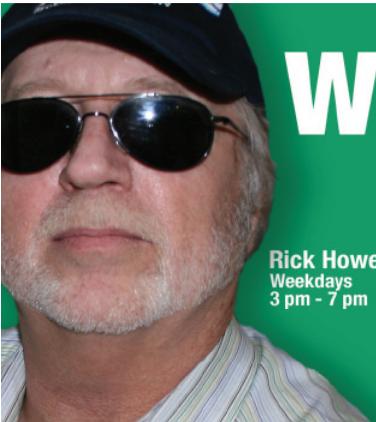
While something made from riesling or torrontés would be fine, Ironstone Vineyards' 2009 Obsession (\$14.95 - \$16.99) breaks the mold of the somewhat familiar by using the symphony grape — a cross between muscat of alexandria and grenache gris.

If it swims, clucks or is served in a bowl with a cream sauce, the clean acidity and ripe fruit components of this off-dry wine will make for a fine dinner partner. Salads, vegetables, shellfish and any dish that throws a bit of heat will also work like a charm with this unique palate cleanser.

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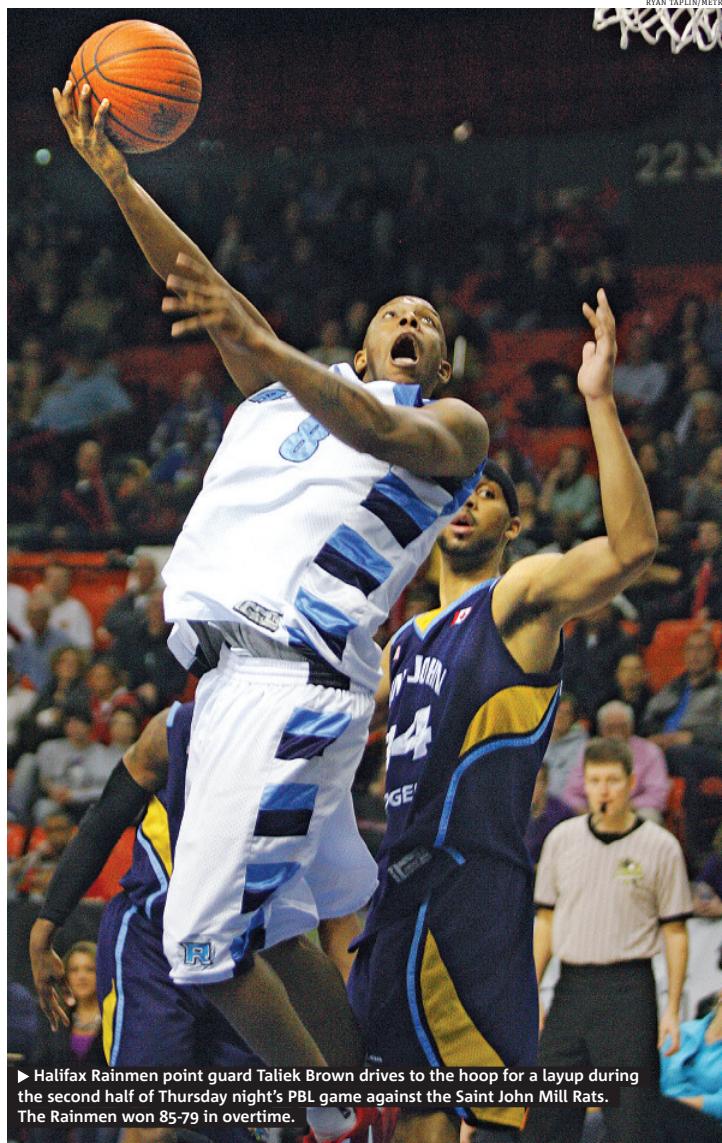


Martin Frk (pictured) and Brent Andrews won't have much time to fret over the Halifax Mooseheads' early playoff exit. The Mooseheads announced on Thursday the two 17-year-old forwards are headed to the IIHF world under-18 championship in Crimmitschau and Dresden, Germany, starting April 14. Frk will play for the Czech Republic and Andrews will suit up for Canada.



Scan code for more sports

Thomas's big night helps Rainmen clinch

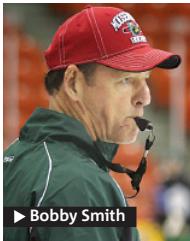


► Halifax Rainmen point guard Taliek Brown drives to the hoop for a layup during the second half of Thursday night's PBL game against the Saint John Mill Rats. The Rainmen won 85-79 in overtime.

Smith will talk to team before media

Halifax Mooseheads head coach and owner Bobby Smith is waiting until Monday to deliver his season-ending comments to media.

Smith said "no comment" when reached on Thursday, adding that he is meeting with his players individually on Friday.



► Bobby Smith

The Montreal Juniors swept the Mooseheads in the QMJHL first round on Wednesday.

MATTHEW WUEST

"I want to meet with those guys before I say anything to anybody," Smith said. "But don't jump to any conclusions."

The Montreal Juniors swept the Mooseheads in the QMJHL first round on Wednesday.

Mooseheads quotes

TRAVIS RANDELL



"The main thing everybody takes from (the playoffs) is it's a whole different competition level. Everything's hard, everything's quick, there's not as much time and space. Not only do you have to be skilled, you have to have the work ethic to go with it."

BRENT ANDREWS

"The boys are definitely excited to get back on the horse next year and get some more wins in the win column and be one of the teams that can challenge for a title. We have a good group of young guys and the future's pretty bright for us."



GERRAD GRANT



"There's a ton of potential here. I can tell in a few years this team is going to be a top-notch team. I'm not just saying that because I played here. There are a lot of skilled guys and a lot of hard-working character guys." □ MATTHEW WUEST

► 4,105 on hand for overtime thriller ► Playoffs open Saturday



MATTHEW WUEST
@METRONEWS.CA

DeAndre Thomas has powered the Halifax Rainmen into the Premier Basketball League playoffs.

With both teams needing a win to clinch a post-season berth, the six-foot-eight, 295-pound centre was a beast in the paint, scoring 12 of Halifax's final 21 points in an 85-79 overtime triumph over the Saint John Mill Rats Thursday night at the Metro Centre.

Thomas, who had a team-high 20 points and 11 rebounds, said he got a pep talk from point guard Taliek Brown before his dominating 12-point run started with 4:01 left in regulation.

"Taliek told me, 'We're going to give you the ball no matter what happens,' and that was all she wrote," said Thomas. "I just had to turn it on and show I was the best player on the court."

It's Thomas's second tour of duty with the Rainmen. He barely saw the floor last season, and started this season with the Lawton-Fort Sill Cavalry before being released in early March.

But he's 30 pounds lighter than last season and is giving the Rainmen production from a position that has long been their Achilles heel.

"Big 'Dre's a force down there ... When he's ready

Jones jettisoned

The Rainmen cut Kavon Jones prior to last night's game.

- Owner Andre Levingston said the six-foot-seven power forward was "not on the same page" as the team.
- Jones, who ran into disciplinary issues with the team earlier in the year, was second in team scoring, averaging 14.6 points



to play and do the things he can do, no one can guard him," said teammate Desmond Ferguson, who had a pair of clutch buckets in overtime. "He's big, he's agile, he can shoot, he gets 'and-ones,' and he was huge for us."

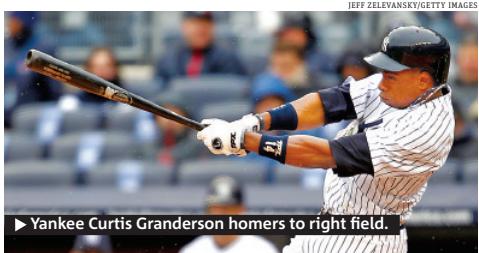
The Rainmen had lost eight of their past 11 games coming into Thursday's game but finished the season 10-10.

They open the best-of-three semifinals against Thomas's former team, the Cavalry, on Saturday at 4 p.m. at the Metro Centre. The Cavalry, 18-2, swept the Rainmen in last year's semifinals and went on to win the PBL title.

"We wouldn't have it any other way than to go through them," Ferguson said. "They put us out last year and we'll try to get this first home game on Saturday."



► Angels shortstop Erick Aybar catches a line drive in a game against the Royals.



► Yankee Curtis Granderson homers to right field.



► Chipper Jones celebrates with teammates after the Braves defeated the Nationals.

Opening Day at the parka

► Batters are up but mercury isn't, as baseball season starts anew in chilly ballparks across the U.S.



► Ramon Hernandez is greeted by Reds teammates at home plate after hitting the game-winning run against the Milwaukee Brewers.

Ballgames

A selection of Thursday's action:

- Curtis Granderson hit a go-ahead homer leading off the seventh inning and Mark Teixeira had a three-run shot off Justin Verlander, lifting New York over the Detroit Tigers 6-3 in the first regular-season game played in the Bronx in March.
- Ramon Hernandez hit a two-out, three-run homer in the bottom of the ninth inning, rallying the Cincinnati Reds to a 7-6 victory over the Milwaukee Brewers in an opening-day flashback to their NL Central title season.
- Returning from major knee surgery, Chipper Jones doubled before scoring the 2011 season's first run on a chilly, damp opening day, and Derek Lowe allowed three singles in 5½ innings, helping the Braves beat the Washington Nationals 2-0.
- Torii Hunter and Jeff Mathis homered, helping Jered Weaver and the Los Angeles Angels beat the Kansas City Royals 4-2.
- Cameron Maybin tied it with a two-out homer in the ninth inning and grounded a single that led to the go-ahead run in the 11th as the San Diego Padres opened with a 5-3 win over the St. Louis Cardinals.

Jays face tough road

The predictions are in and they're not pretty.

Sports Illustrated is forecasting that the Toronto Blue Jays will be last in the American League East at 77-85. ESPN weighs in with a prediction of 79-83 and a fourth-place finish. A trio of Yahoo! Sports baseball writers all expect a fourth-place result and sub-.500 record.

It makes for plenty of bulletin board material for a young squad that is itching to become a contender in one of the toughest divisions in baseball.

"We're a competitive

group," new manager John Farrell said Thursday on the eve of opening day. "We went through six weeks of spring training to come north and win, not to be prepared to be an opponent for someone else."

Toronto surprised many baseball observers last year by posting an 85-77 mark in a rebuilding campaign, good for fourth place in the division. The Jays have several top prospects and many of their young players seem to be on the cusp of becoming solid major leaguers.

What's unclear is how long it will take for Toronto to make its long-awaited return to contender status. The team still has a loyal base of fans but many have become discouraged at the long run of mediocrity since the Jays last won the World Series in 1993.

Toronto kicks off its regular season Friday against the Minnesota Twins (Rogers Sportsnet, 8 p.m. AT) at Rogers Centre. The atmosphere should be electric in what will likely be the lone sellout of the season.

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Leafs still alive with dramatic win

Nazem Kadri scored the shootout's only goal to help the Toronto Maple Leafs beat the Boston Bruins 4-3 on Thursday night. Toronto is 10th in the Eastern Conference, five points behind seventh-place Buffalo and the New York Rangers for one of the eight playoff spots. With the overtime point, the Bruins clinched a tie for the Northeast Division title. Joffrey Lupul scored twice for Toronto, Luke Schenn added a goal and former Bruins forward Phil Kessel had a pair of assists. Halifax's Brad Marchand, David Krejci and Andrew Ference scored for Boston. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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Crosby joins Pens on trip

► 'It was good to see him back out there,' Bylsma says
► Tampa's Hedman glad to see star centre is progressing

Pittsburgh Penguins centre Sidney Crosby, sidelined for nearly three months with a concussion, resumed skating with his teammates Thursday.

The Cole Harbour native has been out since Jan. 6. He took part in the no-contact game-day skate as Pittsburgh prepared for its matchup with Tampa Bay.

The Penguins captain is not ready yet to participate in full practices. A return to game action for the post-season has not been completely ruled out.

"There's actually no expectations on when the next step after this one would be," Penguins coach Dan Bylsma said. "He'd still have to return to a full practice, and then return to



"It was a lot of fun to be back out there. It's just a small step, with a lot to go."

SIDNEY CROSBY ON SKATING WITH HIS PENGUINS TEAMMATES

you don't get symptoms," Crosby said. "Obviously, it's just one day. Try and get through each step."

Crosby had 32 goals and 66 points at the time of his injury. Despite playing just 41 games, he is still the team's leading scorer.

"You've got to make sure you're healthy," Crosby said. "If it takes two months, then it takes two months."

Crosby absorbed a hit to the head in a collision with Washington's David Steckel on Jan. 1, but initially felt only neck soreness. He began feeling worse on Jan. 5, but played that night against Tampa Bay and was checked into the boards by the Lightning's Victor Hedman. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

contact. Those are two things that are down the road, and both of those there's no timetable for either one."

Crosby began individual workouts March 14 and has reported no setbacks.

"It's the same thing with every step, make sure that



For March 31st

Jessie J ft B.o.B - Price Tag
Snoop Dogg ft T-Pain - Boom

Tinie Tempah ft Eric Turner - Written In The Stars
Classified - That Ain't Classy

Britney Spears - Till The World Ends
Rihanna - S&M

Ke\$ha - Blow
Katy Perry ft Kanye West - E.T

Lady Gaga - Born This Way

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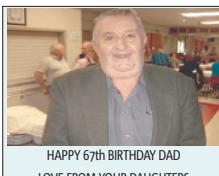
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MISCELLANEOUS

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Crossword

Across
 1 Male cat
 4 Potter's oven
 8 Zeus' wife
 12 — Little Teapot"
 13 Sandwich cookie
 14 Exam format
 15 Museum head?
 17 Scruff
 18 Communist council
 19 Environmentally friendly
 21 Daisy —
 22 Doorway
 26 Most likely dice throw
 29 Jewelry store chain that "every kiss begins with"
 30 A Gershwin
 31 Tramcar loads
 32 U.K. reference bk.
 33 Acute
 34 Census stat
 35 Aviate
 36 Hospital employee
 37 Not svelte
 39 Foundation
 40 Drone
 41 Dermatologist's case
 45 Shrink session
 48 Part of Iberia
 50 Approximately
 51 Concept
 52 Nay canceler
 53 Sketch
 54 Month after Shevat
 55 Fawn's mama

**Down**

1 Gratuities
 2 Melville novel
 3 Sportscaster Al-
 4 Seoul man
 5 Angry
 6 Island garland
 7 Tablet
 8 Esteem
 9 Historic time
 10 Knock
 11 Brewery product
 12 London sparer
 20 Coquettish
 23 Layer
 24 Greek war god

25 Highway division
 26 Daytime drama
 27 Therefore
 28 Swerve
 29 Crucial
 32 Puget Sound capital
 33 Spreading plant
 35 Winter bug
 36 Sweet drink
 38 Pitch
 39 Kentucky college town

40 "Zounds!"
 41 Sandwich spread
 44 Out of the storm
 45 Scuttle
 46 Stick figure?
 47 Can. neighbor
 49 Peculiar

► Yesterday's answer



Today's horoscope

Aries March 21-April 20 Others may go out of their way to prove that you are wrong, but you're having none of it. You know momentum is on your side, whatever the facts might say. You really don't have to care what others believe.

Taurus April 21-May 21 Resist the temptation to look at the world as if everything that happens is a disaster. Focus only on good news. There's plenty of it, if you care to look.

Gemini May 22-June 21 Check the small print carefully because while Mercury (your ruler) is moving retrograde, others may try to convince you that you've got the best deal when, in fact, they will profit a lot more than you.

Cancer June 22-July 22 The more others try to persuade you to do something that you aren't convinced is in your best interests, the more you must resist. Stand up for yourself.

Leo July 23-Aug. 23 Cosmic activity in your fellow Fire sign of Aries will fill your head with big ideas but not all of those ideas will be practical. So, don't get carried away. New opportunities are in the process of developing. Wait.

Virgo Aug. 24-Sept. 22 Someone you usually get along with may say something a hurtful today, but don't let it get to you. He or she just doesn't share your ability to see how easily ill-chosen words can offend.

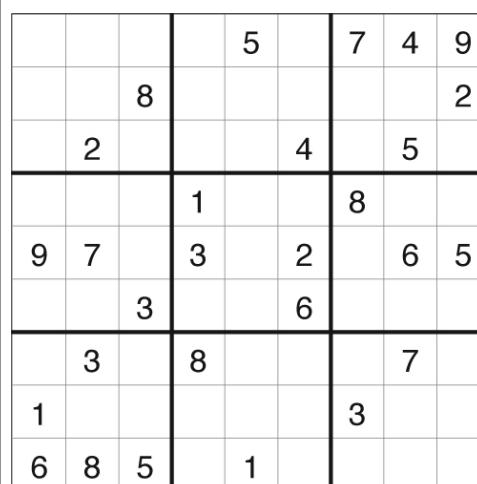
For today's crossword answers and for expanded horoscopes, go to metronews.ca

Libra Sept. 23-Oct. 23 You have nothing to prove and everything to look forward to. Even if you find that a bit hard to believe, changes over the weekend and early next week will convince you that life is still very much worth living.

Scorpio Oct. 24-Nov. 22 If someone shamelessly flatters you, it's a sign he or she is after something — most likely your money. Don't be taken in by his or her honeyed words.

Sagittarius Nov. 23-Dec. 21 You may be worried that your run of good fortune is coming to an end but nothing could be further from the truth. Both the moon and Mars will bring more goodies your way in the next few days.

Sudoku



Send a KISS

Show some love! Send a note to somebody special at kiss@metronews.ca

Machuh, "whenever I'm with you, something inside... Hope you have a great day dahl'n. <3 u WEIGH

Happy birthday! I love you so much and can't wait to see you! Tomorrow is going to be awesome! LOVE, MARCI

To my sexy yeti: I'm looking forward to lots of cuddling and gaming this weekend! You're my level 90 boyfriend YOURS BIG BELUGA

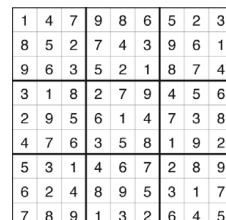
Hi smugle, Just wanted to say you mean the world to me Matthew C. ;so happy I'm spending the rest of my life with YOU!! And just remember meow cats have meow cat feet lol love you<3. YOUR SMUGGLE

Dear Nubbin, happy 1 year! Ever since our first night under the huge orange moon, I knew I was madly in love with you. You're my better half. LOVE ALWAYS, TALLSTACK

How to play

Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved. You solve the puzzle with reasoning and logic.

Yesterday's answer ►



Today



Saturday



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MATHIAS SCHRADER/ THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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